



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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Explore the *India* Adventure at Historic Sully

At a time when Virginia is commemorating the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, Sully Historic Site features a new exhibit evoking the adventurous spirit of travel and trade. *Across the High Seas – the India Venture*, explores global trade in the Federal period. Daily, except Tuesdays, from 11am to 4pm through December, 2006, recapture the spirit during your tour of the 1794 home of Richard Bland Lee.

There were no malls, no catalogs, and no internet sales, yet there was a steady flow of luxury items into early 19th century American gentry homes. Post-Revolutionary American sailing ships joined in the China trade bringing back porcelain, tea, silk, and cotton fabric called Nankeen. Sully's owner, and northern Virginia's first Congressman, Richard Bland Lee engaged in the China trade with his Philadelphia brother-in-law, Zaccheus Collins. Through a venture with the ship, *India*, they were able to import a variety of goods from Nanking and Canton as well as other Asian ports of call.

Summer of 1802 saw the arrival at Sully of a large shipment of goods from the east. Mrs. Lee wrote to her brother, "*enquire the price of a set of bleu Dinner china.*" Imagine anew the anticipation of the household as you admire pieces of hand-painted blue and white export porcelain dishes that made that voyage 200 years ago from Canton to Philadelphia and on to Lee's country home. The case exhibit of original Lee family china is presented courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society and is sponsored by The Sully Foundation, Ltd.

In addition to luxurious Chinese silks, Nankeen cotton was imported in great bales to American households. Its natural buff color and ease of wear and care made Nankeen a desirable textile. In our exhibit see period examples of clothing made up in this fashionable fabric, in particular a rare example of woman's half boots. Clothing and shoes are on loan from Mary Doering, private collector and researcher.

Look inside our open shipping crates to see that the India venture was not just an opportunity to fill a gentleman's home with stylish goods from the Orient, but to understand how commodities once considered exotic and exclusive became basic necessities of American life. For more information contact Barbara Ziman, Events & Marketing Coordinator at 703-708-0861. Sully Historic Site is located at 3601 Sully Road in Chantilly, VA. Call the site at 703-437-1794 or visit online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully.

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